

LIST OF ARRESTS AND MISTREATMENT OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

AZ 4A

July, 1976.

Formosa: A truckload of armed soldiers arrived at a private home and with blows, insults, and profane language, they arrested seven persons and held them prisoners for three days.

August, 1976:

Clorinda: Two married couples were arrested by the Gendarmery and with hostile treatment were held in solitary confinements for two days.

Pirané: Mario Conde was expelled from the city through an order of the police chief and threatened with prison if he dared to return.

October, 1976.

Villa Constitución: A private home was searched, all literature taken, files examined, and addresses taken. Later those people were visited and their religious literature, including Bibles of other religions, was confiscated. The whole congregation had to appear at the police station where statements, finger-prints, and photographs were taken, the treatment given to common criminals. They were threatened with ten years of prison if they were found again with the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses.

November, 1976

Madanos, B.A.: Two Witnesses and two persons who were studying the Bible were arrested and mistreated verbally and physically on the street, with a gun resting on the chest of one of them in order to get information.

Bahía Blanca, B.A.: Two women Witnesses and two young boys were arrested for preaching from house to house. The boys were hit with the gun barrels and later on the two women Witnesses were held in jail for ten days.

December, 1976.

Misionest: A father of a ten-year-old girl who had been expelled from school started court action against the measure, the case reaching the Nation's Supreme Court in December, 1976. The case is still pending.

Córdoba: A Witness, held in jail for 13 days, was questioned at great length, many times blindfolded so that he would not recognize his interrogators.

Las Catitas, Mra.: A Witness was taken from his place of work to the police station where he was questioned by the police commissioner. When the officer did not receive the information that he wanted, he hit the Witness in the face until it bled.

February, 1977.

Tucuman: Ricardo Cesca was held for two days for having Bible literature in his briefcase.

ARGENTINA PROJECT (S200000044)

U.S. DEPT. OF STATE, A/RPS/IPS

Margaret P. Grafeld, Director

☒ Release ☐ Excise ☐ Deny

Exemption(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Declassify: ☐ In Part ☐ In Full

☐ Classify as \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Extend as \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Downgrade to \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_ Declassify on \_\_\_\_\_ Reason \_\_\_\_\_

March, 1977.

**Córdoba:** Teresa Cantarutti was held in jail for four days for being a subscriber to the magazines of the Watchtower Society. In the province of Córdoba about a dozen people were held for the same reason. Blindfolded, they were questioned about being Jehovah's Witnesses, their activities, etc.

April, 1977.

**Tartagal:** Eight police, armed with shotguns, searched a private home where two families were reading the Bible. All 11 present (three men, four women, and four children) were held in prison where the men were slapped and hit with the fist on three different occasions. After one day they were set free.

**Villaguay:** The police burst into the home of a family and arrested the 17 persons meeting there, of which eight were children between the ages of two and fifteen. Later, when the presiding overseer of the local congregation went to the police station to find out what had happened, he too was arrested. Another Witness was taken out of bed in his home at 11 p.m. and arrested. Of the 19 arrested four were women, one of them 76 years old. With the exception of the elderly woman, all the others were held for six days. One of them suffered a badly fractured leg in an accident with a police car in the patio of the police station.

May, 1977.

**Pico Truncado:** Artemio Mancuante was held for five days and all his personal literature was confiscated.

**Santiago del Estero:** The police visited a family at luncheon time and with the pretext of asking some questions they took the five adults, along with a visitor, and held them prisoners for the day.

**Laboulaye:** Two Witnesses were held prisoners for one day. All of their literature, including personal commercial documents, was confiscated.

June, 1977.

**Islas del Ibicuy:** 12 persons, among whom were several sick ones over 70 years of age, were arrested and taken a distance of over 100 kilometers where they were rudely questioned and held for two days. They had to pay their own expenses.

**Aristóbulo del Valle:** Soldiers searched the homes of Witnesses, confiscating all literature, including Bibles not edited by the Witnesses. 15 were arrested, three of whom were women, including one of 66 years of age. Even a man who is not a Jehovah's Witness was arrested for possessing their literature. After spending ten days in jail in Aristóbulo del Valle, they were transferred to one in Oberá and lodged there under inhuman conditions. The jail, measuring four by five meters, had 60 prisoners crowded into it, many of whom took care of their physical needs there in the same

room. One of the Witnesses had to remain seated all night long with his legs sticking out through the bars for lack of space. The next day through the direct intervention of the police chief they were moved to a better place and released at 8 p.m. for lack of evidence. Meanwhile, in Aristobulo del Valle the people were visited by the soldiers and threatened with arrest if they possessed literature of Jehovah's Witnesses and did not burn it.

July 1, 1977.

Crespo, E.R.: An unknown group of people completely burned down an empty Kingdom Hall of Jehovah's Witnesses, which had not been used since September, 1976.

September 28, 1977.

Villa Adelina, B.A.: The latest case took place in the home of Hector Dias. At 4 a.m. on the above date a paramilitary force burst into the home, breaking windows with the purpose to search it. They forced the couple to lie down on the floor while their children remained in another room in bed during the search for weapons, according to the military men. They scattered Bible literature throughout the house and took Uruguayan and Argentine money. Mr. Dias was hit several times.

The mother who lives in another house was treated in the same manner, she being alone in the house. On withdrawing from the house, the military men said that it had been a mistake.

During the search the family was questioned about being Jehovah's Witnesses. Mr. Dias has been involved in the case of a young man who refused to do military service, as the one who had studied the Bible with the young man's family. Previously Mr. Dias had been summoned to the military camp at Campo Mayo to make a statement. Two days after this manifestation of brutal force he was summoned to appear before a Federal Judge, also to make statements.